

CITY OF BELMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION

SUMMARY MINUTES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 06, 2009, 7:00 PM

Chair Horton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Horton, Mayer, Parsons, Frautschi, Mercer, Reed, Mathewson
Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Associate Planner Walker (AP), Assistant Planner Gill (AP), City Attorney Zafferano (CA), Recording Secretary Flores (RS)

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS - None

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments)

Chair Horton announced that the Belmont Neighborhood Association would be sponsoring a Candidates Forum on October 8th from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Senior Center in Twin Pines Park.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4A. Minutes of September 1, 2009

MOTION: By Commissioner Mathewson, seconded by Commissioner Parsons, to approve the Minutes of September 1, 2009 as presented.

Ayes: Mathewson, Parsons, Reed, Mayer, Horton

Noes: None

Abstain: Mercer, Frautschi

Motion passed 5/0/2

5. OLD BUSINESS:

5A. Naughton Avenue, Parcel A/Single Family Design Review – Request for Extension of Approval.

AP Walker summarized the staff memorandum, noting that the bulk of the information relates to both Items 5A and 5B, and recommended approval of the time extensions with the Conditions of Approval attached.

Responding to questions from Commissioners Frautschi and Parsons, AP Walker confirmed that the change in ceiling height did not increase the height of the house, the moving of windows to allow more sun did not change the number of windows or the appearance of the house, the change of the decks at the back of the house from squared to curved did not increase the square footage, and the front door did not change.

Commissioner Frautschi questioned why the first architect was fired and why it took a year to get the new architect up to speed. The applicant was not available to make a presentation or answer questions.

MOTION: By Commissioner Mathewson, seconded by Commissioner Parsons, to adopt the Resolution approving an extension of a Single-Family Design Review for Naughton Avenue, Parcel A (Appl. No. 2008-0034).

Ayes: Mathewson, Parsons, Reed, Mercer, Frautschi, Mayer, Horton
Noes: None

Motion passed 7/0

5B. Naughton Avenue, Lot 52/Single Family Design Review – Request for Extension of Approval.

MOTION: By Commissioner Reed to adopt the Resolution approving the extension of a Single-Family Design Review for Naughton Avenue, Lot 52 (Appl. No. 2008-0035).

Responding to Commissioner Frautschi's request for a description of the changes to the plans for this house, AP Walker reported that this smaller house had a change in the fireplace style but did not have the same number of changes as the first property.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Parsons.

Ayes: Reed, Parsons, Mathewson, Mercer, Frautschi, Mayer, Horton
Noes: None

Motion passed 7/0

Chair Horton announced that Items 5A and 5B can be appealed within ten calendar days.

CDD de Melo reminded the Commission that Planning Condition 1 states that the Director of Community Development may approve minor modifications to plans when they are submitted for building permits. He was confident that the minor changes to these two projects fit within the character of the previous design and could be approved consistent with Condition 1.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

6A. PUBLIC HEARING – 850 Laurel Avenue

To consider a Single-Family Design Review to construct a 597-square-foot addition to an existing 1,671-square-foot single-family residence. The project proposal will bring the total square footage of the residence to 2,269 square feet.

(Appl. No. 2009-0031)

APN: 045-152-080; Zoned: R-3 (Multi-Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303

Applicant/Owners: Steve & Laura Peters

AP Gill summarized the Staff Report, recommending approval with the Conditions attached. He called attention to the requirement for a deed restriction prohibiting the addition of a fourth bedroom without an accompanying parking upgrade.

In response to Vice Chair Mayer, AP Gill explained the process for assuring that a deed restriction is recorded at the County, and CDD de Melo confirmed that this condition needs to be satisfied before a building permit will be issued.

In response to Commissioner Frautschi, AP Gill stated that if the owners wanted to construct a secondary unit, duplex or additional unit they would be required to bring parking into compliance with the ordinance.

In response to Commissioner Mercer, AP Gill explained that there have been instances where rooms labeled as dining or living rooms have been placed in unusual locations. The City's bedroom definition says that an applicant is allowed 1 dining room, 1 living room, 1 kitchen and bathrooms.

Laura Peters, applicant, explained why they need the additional bedroom. Responding to Commissioner Mercer, she stated that the garage is used for storage; one car is parked on the driveway and one on the street. Responding to Commissioner Frautschi's comment about the bedrooms being the only access to the

back yard, Mrs. Peters stated that moving the kitchen to the back was not an option due to the expense.

Chair Horton opened the Public Hearing. There were no requests to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Frautschi, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 7/0 by a show of hands.

Vice Chair Mayer would like to see attention to the front yard landscaping, with perhaps the addition of some trees. As a matter of personal preference, he would like to see the colors of the house changed.

Commissioner Mercer believed that it is a code violation to not have any interior garage parking available and would require that the garage be made available for parking and that it be equipped with a regular upward pull garage door. She also recommended that the front yard needs some shrubs to soften the wood retaining wall on the right side and a tall tree to mitigate the height and bulk of the new second floor.

Commissioner Mathewson concurred with Commissioner Mercer's comments.

Commissioner Parsons had concerns about the proposed stairway design due to the bulky appearance and probable drainage issues. He recommended that the stairway be redesigned by turning it 90 degrees and running it parallel to the street.

Commissioner Frautschi concurred with Commissioners Mercer and Mathewson and would like to see a landscape plan showing additional shrubs and a crowning tree on the wood retaining wall side of the house. Whether the staircase is changed or left as is, the house has a larger bulk appearance from the street. He suggested putting the tree in the space over to the telephone pole. He could also support Commissioner Parsons' suggestion about changing the staircase.

Commissioner Reed commented that this project will be a marked improvement to a street that needs it, and concurred that a tree or two in the front would both mitigate bulk and provide more privacy on the second floor. He was not concerned about the garage as it is his opinion that there are probably a large number of code violators because there are probably a large number of homeowners in Belmont that use their garage for storage and not for parking cars, including those with two-car garages.

Chair Horton concurred that the addition of a tree would be a benefit and could obscure the telephone pole, and also with Commissioner Parsons' suggestions about the drainage.

Commissioner Frautschi added the suggestions that the window over the garage be centered and that the two posts on the front porch be made bigger with cladding. In response to Commissioner Mercer and Vice Chair Mayer, Mrs. Peters stated that as money becomes available they would like to raise the roof line and would center the windows and add gutters at that time. She appreciated the idea of cladding the pillars, but added that there is mostly rock under the retaining wall and not much dirt in which to put plants.

MOTION: By Vice Chair Mayer, seconded by Commissioner Reed, to adopt the Resolution approving a Single-Family Design Review at 850 Laurel Avenue (Appl. No. 2009- 0031) with the condition that a landscape plan be submitted to staff showing the possibility of adding a tree in the front and some other shrubs and landscaping.

Ayes: Mayer, Reed, Mathewson, Frautschi, Horton

Noes: Mercer, Parsons

Motion passed 5/2

Chair Horton announced that this item can be appealed within 10 calendar days.

Chair Horton called for a short break at 8:45 p.m.

7. STUDY SESSION:

7A. Village Districts Zoning Amendment Project & Belmont Signage Ordinance Policies

The purpose of this meeting was to hear continued input from the Planning Commission regarding signage issues associated with the draft zoning amendment for the Downtown Village Area. Discussion ensued, comments and recommendations were given to staff and the consultant. Dyett & Bhatia will incorporate comments into draft text language modifications for future review and adoption by the Planning Commission and City Council

8. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES:

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

8A. Motel 6 – 1101 Shoreway Road
No update at this time.

8B. Charles Armstrong School – 1405 Solana Drive
No update at this time.

8C. Ralston/US-101 Landscape Project
No update at this time.

8D. San Mateo Development – North Road/43rd Avenue
Staff met with the owners of the property that is being remodeled as well as the owner of the property directly to the west of that site. He encouraged Commissioners to come to the Community Development office to review the plans and potential solutions for the aesthetic improvement of that entire section of North Road.

8E. 900 Sixth Avenue – Belmont Vista Facility
No update at this time.

8F. Caltrain Landscape Area
No update at this time.

8G. Parking Study – Downtown Village Areas
No update at this time.

8H. High-Speed Train (HST) Project – San Francisco to San Jose
There had been a recent discussion of potential alignments, and an analysis of the alternatives is available in the Community Development office. Commissioners were invited to be part of a discussion the following day with contractors working on the project and there will be a presentation on the outreach plan in a Study Session format at the City Council meeting of October 13th. He will send a draft of the outreach plan to Commissioners.

8I. 900 South Road – Single-Family Dwelling
Staff has been informed that this property has been sold to another developer/contractor, who has submitted a refresh of the plan check and plans for the project that he believed are the same as what had been approved by the Commission.

8J. Graffiti Removal – Old County Road
No update at this time.

8K. Chuck's Donuts – 641 Ralston
No update at this time.

8L. Emmett House
No update at this time.

8M. Landscape Improvements – City Properties – 780 El Camino Real, 875 Ralston Avenue, Sixth/Emmett Streets
No update at this time.

Other Items

In response to Chair Horton, CDD de Melo stated that a draft zoning text amendment regarding circular driveways is targeted for the first meeting in November and that he will give the tandem parking issue some serious consideration.

CDD de Melo announced that City Hall will be closed from December 25th through January 3rd and asked for and received the Commission's approval to cancel the January 5th meeting.

9. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2009

Liaison: Commissioner Frautschi
Alternate Liaison: Chair Horton

10. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, October 20, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall.

The Tuesday, November 3rd meeting will be moved to Thursday, November 5th due to the election.

Carlos de Melo
Planning Commission Secretary

CD's of Planning Commission Meetings are available in the
Community Development Department.
Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.